

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 04408 051224Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, GE
SUBJECT: RUDOLF BAHRO SENTENCED TO EIGHT YEARS IN PRISON

REFS: (A) 77 BERLIN 6984, (B) 77 BERLIN 7021,
(C) 77 BERLIN 7102, (D) BERLIN 1276

1. ALL GDR MEDIA JUNE 30/JULY 1 REPORTED THAT
DISSIDENT GDR ECONOMIST RUDOLF BAHRO HAS BEEN
SENTENCED TO EIGHT YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR INTELLIGENCE
ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF THE FRG. THE REPORTS,
WHICH ARE FAIRLY LENGTHY AND DETAILED BY GDR
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 04408 051224Z

MEDIA STANDARDS FOR SIMILAR CASES, STATE THAT BAHRO
HAD FOR SOMETIME COLLECTED INTELLIGENCE FOR "ENEMY
FORCES IN THE FRG" AND THAT HE HAD ENGAGED IN
"ENEMY ACTIVITIES" THROUGH "FABRICATING FALSE
REPORTS, CRUDE DISTORTIONS AND UNTRUTHFUL ACCUSATIONS"
AND HAD CHANNELED THEM TO THE FRG THROUGH HIS
CONTACTS WITH FRG CORRESPONDENTS IN THE GDR.

MENTIONED BY NAME IS FORMER SPIEGEL CORRESPONDENT ULRICH SCHWARZ, WHO WAS EXPELLED FROM THE GDR IN JANUARY 1978 FOR "MISUSING HIS FUNCTIONS AS A JOURNALIST." THE REPORTS FURTHER STATE THAT FOR HIS INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES BAHRO WAS PAID AROUND 200,000 DEUTSCHE MARKS. THE REPORTS CONCLUDE BY STATING THAT BAHRO WAS SENTENCED FOR VIOLATING PARAGRAPHS 98 AND 245 OF THE GDR CODE.

2. COMMENT: FOR SOME TIME THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS IN BOTH EAST AND WEST BERLIN THAT BAHRO WOULD BE RANSOMED OUT OF THE GDR OR EXPELLED RATHER THAN BROUGHT TO TRIAL. SEVERAL OF OUR EAST GERMAN CONTACTS BELIEVE (ALTHOUGH WE ARE UNABLE TO CONFIRM THIS) THAT BAHRO WAS OFFERED HIS FREEDOM BY EAST GERMAN AUTHORITIES ON CONDITION THAT HE ACCEPTED EXPULSION TO THE WEST, BUT THAT HE REFUSED. WE FIND IT NOTABLE THAT THE GDR MEDIA REPORTS OF THE ACCUSATIONS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DETAILED THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE FOR SIMILAR PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ALLEGED ESPIONAGE AGENTS. THE REGIME'S AIM IN THIS REGARD MAY BE INDIRECTLY TO WARN GDR CITIZENS WHO ARE AWARE OF THE SUBSTANCE OF BAHRO'S WRITINGS AGAINST SPREADING HIS IDEAS FURTHER.

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PAGE 03 BERLIN 04408 051224Z

3. POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS FIGURES IN WEST BERLIN AND THE FRG IMMEDIATELY PROTESTED BAHRO'S SENTENCING AND ARE CERTAIN TO KEEP HIS CASE TO THE FOREFRONT OF WEST GERMAN OFFICIAL AND MEDIA ATTENTION IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, PROBABLY ON A LEVEL AT LEAST EQUAL TO THAT CURRENTLY ACCORDED IMPRISONED GDR DRAFT RESISTER NICO HUEBNER. GIVEN THE TIMING OF THIS "TRIAL" AND SENTENCING, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT THE BAHRO CASE AS WELL AS HUEBNER'S ARE ALL THE MORE LIKELY TO BE ON THE MINDS OF THE WEST BERLINER DURING THE TIME THE PRESIDENT VISITS WEST BERLIN. WE JUDGE BAHRO TO BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DISSIDENT FIGURES TO EMERGE ON THE EAST GERMAN SCENE IN SOME TIME AND WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED AT THE CONSIDERABLE INTEREST WHICH HIS IDEAS AND ARREST HAVE ELICITED AMONG POLITICALLY-AWARE EAST GERMANS (SEE REFS, ESP BERLIN 1276). BOLEN

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